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THE TREATMENT OF THE VILLAIN IN SHAKSPERE AND MOLIERE.

It is difficult for us, long accustomed to think of Shakspeare as the supreme poet of all time, to close our eyes to his greatness as a poet and consider him only as a dramatist—as a creator of character, a constructor of plot and situation—and suffer him to be brought into serious comparison with Molière. Yet Shakspeare is no more surely the greatest dramatist of England than we now recognize Molière to be of France. They form, perhaps, with Sophocles a trio of the great constructive dramatists of the world. So while on the literary side we should be untrue to the one and unjust to the other to compare them, on the purely dramatic side they demand comparison; nay, if Shakspeare be the Hector who advances from the English lines proudly challenging any dramatist to match him, it must be the lot of Molière to meet him from the evener ranks of France.

The methods and development of Molière and Shakspeare are so entirely unlike that a comparison of them means mostly contrast. In no respect are their dramatic methods more clearly portrayed and their development more strangely different than in the drawing of their villain characters. Those of Shakspeare are many and among his best-known figures; in all Molière we find but three real villains. The reason for this difference in so essential a feature of dramatic composition is not far to seek. Shakspeare was concerned in his greatest period with the deeper and more serious side of life; Molière remained a comedy writer to the end. Shakspeare began his apprenticeship with the old “tragedy of blood;” Molière began with utterly non-moral farce drawn from the *commedia del arte*.

After his first period of bright comedy, where the villain scarcely appears, “Love’s Labor’s Lost,” “The Comedy of Errors,” “The Two Gentlemen of Verona,” and “A Mid-

summer Night's Dream," Shakspeare returned with commanding power to the tragedy of blood, and created in Richard III. the perfect tyrant type. With King John he began a deeper and subtler type of villain; and then, in Shylock, somewhat blended the two types, yet so fused them in the strong personality of a great nature, and so relieved each darker trait with one more noble, that it may be questioned whether Shylock can truly be called a villain. But the evil side of life had now taken strong hold on Shakspeare's mind; his comedies became full of tragic possibilities, and the villain appears in almost every play he wrote from this time on. Through the succeeding dramas a deepening of the villain character can be noticed till the two types clearly emerge again in the subtle Cassius and the tyrant Claudius; yet Cassius is a noble Roman, a man worthy of the love of Brutus; and Claudius, on the other hand, is a secondary part. "Measure for Measure" brings the tyrant once more into the foreground, but Angelo is forced to repentance; while the subtle and insinuating type of villain is at last fully crystallized and demonized in Iago. He is the perfection of human villainy; so human that defenses of him have been written—so villainous that he could scarcely be made blacker. After drawing Iago, Shakspeare had left himself little more to do in this direction. Except in "Macbeth," where crime becomes almost cosmic, the villain character tends to become of secondary importance; the tyrant type is confined to the minor characters, or else, as in the later comedies, culminates in repentance; the second type tends to become confused or unrelieved, till it finally bursts in the filthy Iachimo. So that in selecting the most splendid and typical of Shakspeare's villains, we might well take Richard on the one hand and Iago on the other; and between them, perhaps, having the unfeeling, tyrannical exultation of the former, and the keen, demon-like, determined purpose of the latter, yet with a largeness of nature making him almost a hero, we should put Shylock. At any rate, these three leading figures may be taken as fairly representing Shakspeare's rich genius in the portrayal of his villain characters.

A strangely close and very interesting parallelism to these three villains which we have singled out from Shakspeare is found in the Don Juan, Harpagon, and Tartuffe of Molière. Molière began his work, as we have pointed out above, with light farces based entirely on Italian models. The first of these, "Le Jalousie du Balbouillé," contains the situation of a wife returning home late at night, being locked out by her suspecting husband, inducing him to come out by pretending to kill herself, then slipping past him into the house and locking him out in turn, so that her parents, arriving on the scene, condemn him as unfaithful. If taken in its full significance, this is truly a tragic situation. Yet it no more occurs to us to think it so than to shudder at the awful deeds of Punch. Le Barbouillé and Angélique are not in the least responsible beings, and villainy for such creatures is a moral impossibility. After writing most of his greatest plays, Molière returned to this same subject in "George Dandin;" he had become intensely human in the interval; his characters had become responsible human beings; another turn of the screw would have made the play a tragedy; but Molière's lightness of touch still saves it from this, and Angélique again escapes our deep reproach and scorn. In "Les Précieuses Ridicules," the first great play of Molière, the situation is also one which might have been made tragic; but Mascarille, rolling in his exuberant conceit, fanning himself with the forced flattery of the silly *précieuses*, has no relation to the seriousness of such a situation. Molière became serious for the first time in "Don Garcie de Navarre," and thoroughly human for the first time in "L'École des Femmes," and then he was ready to write his great Tartuffe. This was Molière's Iago; but instead of reaching it as the climax of a dozen villain characters, it was his first trial. He followed it immediately with Don Juan, a villain in some respects like Shakspeare's Richard; and lastly, in "L'Avare," he gave us Harpagon, who, being a very human and unusual type of miser, may be brought into comparison with Shylock.

Counting out the bloody and disgusting figures in "Titus Andronicus," the first genuine villain of Shakspeare is his

Richard III. In him Shakspeare was dealing with an accepted character; we are prepared, when he makes his first entrance, to recognize him as the man who without remorse or pity will wade through blood and slaughter to the throne, and triumph grimly over every obstacle. In treating Don Juan, Molière had exactly this same advantage; he was dealing with a character already known, and a story already popular with the theater-going public of his time.

And the characters of both Richard and Don Juan had in them those elements of intense tragic interest and half-humorous, fascinating evil force which were calculated to make them popular subjects on the stage. Both are men of physical bravery, of power, of readiness in action; and this pleases us. Both are men of strong personality, lording it superbly over their fellows, whom they despise and scorn; this fascinates us. Both are men of humor in the most serious circumstances—Richard, for instance, in his treatment of Hastings; Don Juan in the scene with Don Carlos in Act III.—and this delights us. Both know the strength and the weakness of women, and play upon their feelings with cynical self-satisfaction; this rouses our deepest indignation. Both, in their pride of intellect, invert the moral order of the world, making every one else subservient to their personal desires; and this gives zest to the inevitable tragic end.

But Richard, though fascinating and magnetic, is deformed and solitary; Don Juan is anything but so. Richard's appetite is for action; Don Juan's is for lust. Richard's only redeeming feature is his admiration for his father; Don Juan's darkest point of infamy is his treatment of Don Louis. Richard has "the plain devil and dissembling looks" to aid him from the first; Don Juan reaches hypocrisy as the culmination of his wickedness. Richard has more demonlike intensity, more need to vent himself upon the world; Don Juan is of a less impassioned cast of mind, so that while the dream of ghosts drives Richard to despair, the waking vision of a miracle merely leads Don Juan to deeper villainy. Again, Richard begins with wooing a lady whom he intends to abandon, and Don Juan begins with abandoning one whom

he has lately won. Richard, in soliloquy, determines frankly to be a villain; Don Juan as frankly lays bare his character to Sganarelle, and with an irony worthy of Richard defends himself in his unholy course. Richard's deepening in crime and the approach of his final doom is marked by the wailings of desolated women, and reports of the growing force of Richmond; we are taught this with Don Juan by the calls he receives to repent, and by his scornful spurning of them all. There is no more repentance in one than in the other; skeptical to the last, despising all human frailty, and defying God and man, each passes to his inevitable end.

In drawing the character of a miser, both Molière and Shakspeare departed from the conventional type, and felt it necessary to add certain other qualities both of deepening and relief. Harpagon possesses his establishment; he has his servants about him; he is represented as in love. It is true that these are all made points of ridicule; the horses may drop dead from want of food, Master Jacques must serve both as cook and coachman, the dowry of Marianne and her frugality are the things which Harpagon most esteems. But horses, servants, and love are not in the usual miser's manner. As for Shylock, though he must always stand for greed of gold, it may almost be proved that he was not a miser at all. Gold is his protection against a nation that is persecuting all his race; that Antonio lends out money gratis embitters him, but Shylock's real enmity is caused by a Christian's insults to his dignity, his nation, his religion:

You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog,
And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine.

Launcelot pretends to be starved, but his lively manner betrays him; or at least his estimate must be modified by that of Shylock—

that thou shalt not *gormandize*
As thou hast done with me.

When Jessica has gone he makes no secret of his grief for the loss of his money, but still his cry is "O my daughter! O my *Christian* ducats!" The ring Leah had given him he would not have sold for a wilderness of monkeys; and the

first groan of anguish which we hear from him after Jessica's flight is merely: "My own flesh and blood to rebel!" That she has gone with a Christian is the fearful blow. "The curse never fell on our nation till now: I never felt it till now. . . . I would my daughter were dead at my feet and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin!" Who will say, in the presence of such grief, that he wished to pick the jewels out from her dead ears? With careless scorn he rejects the offer of twice the value of Antonio's bond—nay,

If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them.

This is a strange sort of avarice!

But it is only as miserliness leads to cruelty or injustice that it becomes actually criminal. Greed of gain is the prime motive with Harpagon, and from it is derived almost every sentiment which he expresses, and every act he does. He beats and sends away the servant whom he merely suspects may have seen where he had buried his treasure; and when he suspects Valère of having stolen it he thinks the gallows too easy a punishment, he should be broken alive on the wheel! In all seriousness he tells his daughter that it would have been better that she should have drowned than that her rescuer should be Valère. Shylock's cruelty also proceeds originally from the same source; or at least without the losses Antonio has made him suffer, he would never have sought his pound of flesh. But instead of his cruelty remaining secondary, as with Harpagon, it becomes at once the main-spring of the play. While Harpagon's tyranny is made a fit subject for comedy by Molière's exuberant exaggeration and never-failing sense of fun, Shylock's revenge is made all but justifiable, and his final overstepping of the mark is met by his speedy downfall. Antonio had said:

I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee so again, to spurn thee too;

and it would have been so. Had Shylock relented any time before the last, he would have been but a "soft and

dull-eyed fool," who "let a serpent sting him twice." If Shylock in the end had made terms with Antonio, he would have constituted himself the hero of the piece, and Antonio would have become the morbid villain! Of course this would have ruined the drama, and would have been inconsistent with the full tragic depth of Shylock's nature.

Only in one particular does Harpagon show a true similarity to Shylock. It is in his keen humor and deep insight into nature. This is illustrated by the easy mastery with which he beguiles Cléante, leading him to betray his love for Marianne. The calm, cynical superiority with which he does this is worthy of Shylock in his contemptuous scorn of Gratiano. In spite of this one point of similarity, however, and in spite of the fact that both Shylock and Harpagon are avaricious and cruel and both are the central figures of comedies which they make so by their own discomfort and failure, Shylock is so much grander and nobler a creation that it would be absurd to compare him with Harpagon. Nothing could be more unlike than the treatment of this border land of villain by Molière and Shakspeare.

We come now to the master stroke of our authors, to the characters who represent their final word on human evil; and here their conceptions, though outwardly differing, are in reality very much alike. Iago pretending to be honest, and Tartuffe pretending to be pious, both betraying their closest friends and benefactors in the most sacred relations of life, these are the greatest villains of Molière and Shakspeare, almost as surely the greatest thoroughly human villains in all the range of literature. We have noticed the progress of the villain character in Shakspeare from its early perfection in the hot and bloody Richard to its higher perfection in the cold and calculating Iago. As this is Shakspeare's supreme effort in villain creation, we may look more carefully at the exact means he employs to bring before us this perfect type of human wickedness, and with this we may contrast the unique and interesting method employed by Molière.

Iago opens the tragedy, which out of his own evil will he is to begin and accomplish and become the victim of, by a

confidential chat with his secondary dupe, Roderigo. He talks in so frank and open a manner that "honest" is a natural title to apply to him. Iago is, after all, not so far from honest as we are accustomed to esteem him. He is a companionable fellow; he is hale and hearty and well met. He hides his hatred from Othello, as who but a Timon or an Alceste would not? From Roderigo all he needs to disguise is the use he puts him to; and consequently, that aside, he speaks with perfect candor. If he were merely a hypocrite, he would have, as Tartuffe has, one dupe to several persons who see through him. But Roderigo, Montano, Cassio—Othello and Desdemona both—even his own unsuspecting wife—all are easy victims for Iago because of his frank and honest manner. That frankness and that honesty could not be wholly assumed by any man. Tartuffe, lusty and greedy, is a hypocrite by nature; Iago, cold-hearted and bitter, is as naturally "honest." They are both fine examples of that essential duality of our natures which is exemplified also in the superstitious fear of Richard III. and Don Juan's turning away dumb from Elvira; by Shylock's tenderness for Jessica, and Harpagon's genuine love for Marianne.

Iago is so well liked by everybody about him, so affectionately trusted by Othello himself, that we are led to wonder what may have been his life before the tragedy begins. Was Shakspeare following the accepted heavy villain of the stage, and representing in Iago a man whose tendency was naturally toward wickedness, who fulfilled the law of his being by running counter to the principles of right? Or was he a careless and honest enough man, congenial and easy-going, with little to trouble his conscience and very little conscience to be troubled? He was surely not only popular with Cassio and the rest, but intimate with at least three "great ones of the city;" a man with much promise of success in life, when suddenly we find him receiving a check to his fortunes and a deadly insult to himself. These vexed and annoyed him in the extreme; nay, they roused his anger and his hatred; and both connected themselves immediately with Cassio and Othello. The Moor had raised the unmilitary

Florentine to the post of lieutenant, a post which Iago knew very well that he himself deserved. To a man of action, unphilosophic and selfish, this was enough to engender a bitterness growing by its own existence into actual hatred. But back of this, he really suspected both the "old black ram" and the handsome civilian of having made a cuckold of him. Instead of the wild rage and "great revenge" of Othello, instead of looking with lionlike ferocity to a double murder, and breathing the awful accusation only at the last appointed hour, Iago, with more sane self-control, but with not a moiety of the great passion of his general, proceeds forthwith to accuse Emilia to her face (as is shown by IV., ii., 175), and being unsatisfied by this, seeks a darker and more subtle means to avenge himself. He suspecting Othello—how beautifully it would be balanced by Othello's suspecting Cassio!—perfect!—an adequate revenge on both! He did not realize the great depths of Othello's nature, how differently he would respond to the same mental stimulus, what fearful consequences would be involved, how he would endanger his own life, and the life of Desdemona.

And so, like Shylock, Iago has his full measure of cause. As with Shylock, also, it is possible that he was carried on by developing circumstances farther than he had really intended when the first step was taken; but while Lorenzo and his mocking, gay-hearted associates drove Shylock to the extreme, Iago was impelled only by his own impotence to free himself from the course he had entered upon. And finally, as with Shylock again, there came an opportunity to recant and to ward off the impending doom. But Shylock had not wisdom and mercy sufficient to exchange the bond he had from Antonio for another protecting himself from insults and ill usage in the future; and Iago had not the kindness nor the courage to go to Othello when Desdemona so piteously implored him, and repeat to him the vindicating scene he had just witnessed. But until Shylock heard Portia's appeal for mercy at the trial, and until Iago saw how Desdemona was being engulfed in the general tragedy, who will say that either Shylock or Iago was unjustified from a narrow point of view in plotting his revenge?

And with that superb genius with which Shakspeare always binds his whole conception together, note how nicely Iago's suspicions of Emilia relieve his treatment of her; and without our in the least sharing those suspicions, how much less pure they make her character than that of the equally suspected Desdemona. "Would you for all the world?" Why, yes! with Emilia "all the world" would be quite sufficient reparation! Therein lies all the difference between the supreme purity and purity that is only approximate. Iago is somewhat relieved, moreover, from the full responsibility for the crime by Desdemona's little lie in saying she could fetch the handkerchief but would not now, by Emilia's much grosser deceit in failing to reveal its whereabouts when she knew at least a part of its fatal significance (she confesses it in V., ii., 240), and also by Cassio's coarse jocoseness, laying his character open to suspicion, when he is speaking of his dealings with Bianca. On flaws in each of these, as well as on Othello's own hot-headed blindness, the coming of the final doom depends.

But still Iago is the mainspring of it all. It is around his evil will, as the central sun of the system, that the faults and follies of all the rest revolve. Roderigo is his man, and his only; Cassio is little other than his foil; for him Emilia steals the handkerchief; even the huge Othello moves about in obedience to the spell of his evil-working wand. His power of controlling men is due largely to his intellectual superiority to all about him. Roderigo is a man not easy to be managed; he is always about to break loose and act with determination for himself; it requires no small amount of skill in our villain-hero to keep him in subjection to his wish. And again, if there can be more of anything else than of pure devilishness in his "mincing" the account he gives of Cassio's escapade, it is the fine insight into character and commanding intellectual daring with which he executes the whole affair.

But he does this no more by his brilliant intellectual power than by his ever-present saving sense of humor. Iago's humor is one of the most potent means employed in the play to

set in relief both his brilliancy and his infamy. With Rod-erigo it takes a healthy and hearty turn: "Drown thyself? Drown cats and blind puppies!" Yet we are not surprised when immediately afterwards he plans with "double knavery" to "abuse Othello's ear." With Cassio his humor has still more of unromantic common sense: "As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound." There is a greater contrast, too, between his merry manner and his sinister cogitations. "And let me the canakin clink, clink" is a genuine but superficial expression of his nature; underneath it we can hear the clink of the chain with which he would bind down the souls of those about him. With Desdemona the humor of Iago tends to pass over into licentiousness. He does not feel the impotence of even Mephistopheles before the purity of Margaret. In the opening of Act II. he is indeed a most profane and liberal counselor. With a trifling coarseness, which Cassio attributes to a soldier's bluntness, he says such innocent yet half suggestive things as should tend to bring them all into a looser freedom. Cassio takes Desdemona's hand, and then Iago's aside shows his whole nature in a dozen lines. His ambition is there, but not with the unrestrainable intensity of Richard III.; his hatred is there, but not with Shylock's implacableness; it has a different tone, a sly and scornful insinuation which shows a deeper villainy of nature still: "Ay, well said, whisper!" From this time we can have no hope of a happy outcome. With what an intense bitterness we hear him say:

O, you are well-tuned now!
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

And with this dark determination he goes to his unholy task. He seems not to have been capable of realizing the intensity of the agony he was about to cause. We do not feel that he has half of Shylock's relish for the sufferings of his victims. He does not appreciate how much misery the human mind is capable of enduring. It is because of this callousness of his nature that his humor can find play; that he

can answer Desdemona's heart-tearing appeals with such mock sympathy:

There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry!

A character thus finely compounded of intellectual daring and devilishness, a cause of vengeance and its opportunity at hand, and the inevitable story has but to tell itself. There is no need of soliloquy; there really was no need of it from the first. Iago leads Cassio to urge his suit to Desdemona, and the wheels of the tragedy begin to move. There follows cog in cog irresistibly to the end—the persistence of Cassio, the rage of Othello, the despair of Desdemona. Iago, the master mechanic, stands back of all, guiding and controlling the huge engine, till at last he is caught in the mechanism of his own contriving, and hurled to destruction by its gigantic power.

If “Othello” is perhaps the most perfect of the great tragedies of Shakspeare, “Tartuffe” may claim a similar superiority among the greater plays of Molière. Yet while “Tartuffe” may really rival “Othello” in its perfection of form, the means by which the great hypocrite is made known to us differ at almost every point from those used in Shakspeare's portrayal of Iago.

The comedy of “Tartuffe” opens with Madame Pernelle, a rather violent religious shrew, condemning the innocent evil practices of her son's household, and defending against four of the younger members a certain Tartuffe. It appears at once that he also has been condemning their worldly amusements and managing the household of Orgon. Dorine, with the inviolable privilege of the household servant, tells how Tartuffe had come to them a stranger with no shoes to his feet, but how he had acquired a subtle mastery over Orgon and had come to lord it in his house; how his piety was only glaring hypocrisy, retained by condemning the harmless pleasures of the rest; and then, to crown it all, she believed him secretly in love with Elmire, Orgon's wife. But Madame Pernelle has defended Tartuffe with more words than all the rest combined have been able to employ in his favor;

much more has been said for him than against him; it has been repeatedly stated how he lives only to do the will of Heaven. How do we know that she may not be right? Even if Tartuffe is extreme in his sentiments, does it follow that he is only a hypocrite? We can see that his severity has prejudiced this worldly household against him. But Molière has fortified himself against any possible misconstruction on this point by making Madame Pernelle herself a very disagreeable person; to be well spoken of by her is perhaps a stronger condemnation of Tartuffe than to be reviled by all the others. As she gives her maid a blow and marches off in a rage, we are ready to believe the very worst! But we are now informed that Madame Pernelle is not half so infatuated with Tartuffe as is Orgon himself. Upon which Orgon enters, and the drama opens in good earnest:

How has everything been while he was away?

Elmire was sick, and had a terrible headache.

And Tartuffe?

Remarkably well, full and plump, with ruddy cheeks.

The poor man!

Nothing could be more complete in revealing the whole character and situation than this repeated refrain of "Et Tartuffe?" and "Le pauvre homme!" Orgon's infatuation knows no bounds. To Cléante, the indispensable French confidant, he says he would see his brother, wife, and children die before he would cease to provide for a man of such marvelous piety. And with the suggestion that he will indeed sacrifice his daughter's happiness, this great introductory act comes to a close.

It is a point merely noteworthy, not in itself remarkable, that the first act of Tartuffe should contain only preparation for his entrance and not show us the impostor himself. But when the entire second act is over, and still we have not seen him, it is time to comment. What more could have been needed to prepare us? One thing there is, and that the second act supplies in all its full significance: a young girl's loathing of the thought of marriage to him. If this were

brought before our sympathies after our acquaintance with Tartuffe had been made, we should have a background of opinion by which to judge her reluctance. Our estimation of him having been already formed, her hatred of him could add but little to it. But Tartuffe remaining still unseen, Marianne's fear that she will be forced to wed him not only rouses in response our deepest dread for her and increases tenfold our wrath at the blinded Orgon, but lets our imagination paint in the most lurid hues the dastardly hypocrite who is soon to descend upon us. When that is done, we not only know Tartuffe, but hate him.

But the second act is really concerned more with advancing the story than with the delineation of Tartuffe's character. It contains a plot to defeat the impostor in his evil aims; and the opportunity for a quarrel and reconciliation of Marianne and Valère is more than Molière can resist. But episode as it clearly is, a lovers' quarrel is sufficient, when Molière has treated it, to make our interest in the outcome genuine and permanent; and no matter how foolish the lovers are, we have been forced to take sides with them, and consequently have taken sides against the ominous Tartuffe.

To glance for one parting moment back over the first two acts of the plays we are comparing, for it is in these that the characters are delineated for us, we find that Iago was introduced at the rise of the curtain, and has scarcely left the stage from that time on. In the first act he reveals to Roderigo all but one corner of his heart, he rouses Brabantio against Othello, and a moment later takes up arms with the Moor against the senator, and then in a long soliloquy lays bare all the blackness of his plans and purposes. By the end of the second act he has enslaved Roderigo for his own pecuniary gain, has sullied Desdemona's ear with his coarseness, and finally has caused poor Cassio's ruin and has set him as the unwitting implement to bring about the general undoing of them all. By his asides, soliloquies, confessions, and black deeds, he has fully brought himself before us. Yet his character is no more of a finished product when the third act opens than that of the utterly unseen Tartuffe.

Tartuffe has been described only by prejudiced people, yet we know him as he is. There is need for him now merely to come before us, telling his servant to lock up his hair shirt and scourge, and proceed immediately to make love to Orgon's wife. He has no need for an aside, no need for a soliloquy, and these, the means by which Iago tells his evil intents and nature to us, Tartuffe not once employs. One thing, however, is even beyond the promise we had of him. His confession—nay, profession—of his unworthiness after Damis' accusation, his complete winning over of Orgon in the most impossible situation, ingrafting himself more deeply than ever on Orgon's heart, securing greater ease of access to Elmire, and having his enemy banished for betraying him, are wonderful, but no less natural. This is the last touch of character revelation in the play. To witness more of his fell purposes can only reassure us in our insight into the hollowness of his dark nature. His having secured the deed of gift, his turning his benefactor out of doors, his proving to be a well-known criminal, add but little to our knowledge of him as a villain.

Shakspeare's genius, as was said in the beginning, was of a grander and heavier turn than Molière's; Richard III. is a much more commanding figure than Don Juan; Shylock is a villain so superb in his nobler qualities as to be unique in literature, there is nothing of his immenseness of nature in Harpagon. But in Tartuffe Molière has shown his power to create a serious villain character which we could hardly have dared to hope from a writer of delightful comedy; a creation so greatly conceived and nobly executed that he does not falter or fall when brought into comparison with the very greatest villain conception in all Shakspeare.

HENRY DAVID GRAY.